
News Release

U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey

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Diagnosis Fun at the USGS

Campers from Science Camp 1999, at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), became cartographic detectives as they created a map from a pile of puzzle pieces. Ben Was, Audio-Visual Presentation Specialist at the USGS, showed how contour lines, road symbols, and other geographic features could be used as clues to piece together the map of the USGS National Center. Mapping orientation was just one of the exercises planned for Diagnosis Fun, the fourth, and last, 2-week session of the highly successful science camp developed by the USGS in partnership with the Reston Association. Four 2-week sessions are offered for children ages 8-12.

During the 2-week Diagnosis Fun session, Lee DeCola, USGS Research Scientist, briefed the campers on using Global Positioning System receivers with maps. He then led them on a mapping adventure that demonstrated how scientists find the locations of disease-carrying insects, such as the deer tick, which transmits Lyme disease.

Two field trips highlighted the session. Robin Jones, a Fairfax County Crime Prevention Officer, gave campers a fascinating tour of the Reston Police Station. They learned how police officers "process" a crime scene, how a fingerprint kit is used, and how to use the Internet safely. The science campers also traveled to the Smithsonian Institution's exhibit on microbes. There they learned about the incredible microbes, which can bring benefits and healing (*Penicillium*) or disease and death (HIV). Microbes in the form of bacteria were even able to survive on the Moon for 2 years after being left there in a camera by astronauts.

Other educational activities during this 2-week session included isolating DNA from an onion in the science lab, learning about the importance of nutrition and exercise while using an interactive multimedia CD-ROM in the computer lab, and taking a tour of the USGS Health Unit led by Bonnie Short, R.N. The children also went boating on Lake Anne, swam at Reston area pools, and enjoyed a cookout and outdoor festival.

For more information on the Reston Association Science Camps, please contact the Reston Association Registrar's office at 435-6551.

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As the nation's largest water, earth and biological science and civilian mapping agency, the USGS works in cooperation with more than 2,000 organizations across the country to provide reliable, impartial scientific information to resource managers, planners, and other customers. This information is gathered in every state by USGS scientists to minimize the loss of life and property from natural disasters, contribute to sound economic and physical development of the nation's natural resources, and enhance the quality of life by monitoring water, biological, energy, and mineral resources.

USGS

(Note to Reporters/Editors: If you are interested in obtaining digital photographs of the activities mentioned in this news release, please contact Cheryl O'Brien at 703-648-5929 with your e-mail address.)